779
792 Estimates on the total number of clergy[11] vary, but in 1931 they appear to have numbered 500,000 to 600,000. Recent refugees report that four out of every seven clerics have been forced to return to lay life.[12] By 1954 it was estimated that there were only 2,500 clergy remaining in the whole of China, "of which half are Chinese Communist Party agents."[13] Even allowing for exaggeration, it would appear that the Buddhist clergy as a group has been nearly eliminated and that its dwindling influence in society has reached the vanishing point.

799 While the traditional clergy was in decline, Buddhist laymen assisted by a few monks attempted the reinvigoration of the Chinese Buddhist community. The leadership of this movement was largely from the East China Region. Modern-minded Buddhists felt that a lesson could be learned from Protestantism in the West: that an entrenched clergy could not be the instrument of sweeping reform. Hence their efforts were concentrated on building lay organizations of various kinds: social welfare organizations such as the Red Swatika Society (modeled on the Red Cross), YMBA and YWBA patterened on the YMCA and YWCA, Buddhist schools and seminaries to train a modern clergy, and research centers for the re-evaluation of the Buddhist heritage. They attempted to reach out and join hands with Buddhists in other Asiatic countries, and good-will tours and conferences were organized. Buddhist writing

11. Chan, op. cit., pp. 80-81.
12. Chan op. cit., pp. 90-91.
13. Atrocities.